

CENSUS BUREAU GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ASSISTING PEOPLE WITH CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRES

The Funders Census Initiative (an official 2010 Census Partner) has been working with the U.S. Census Bureau's Partnership Office staff to develop guidelines for community organizations that want to assist the people they serve with filling out their 2010 census forms. The guidance below is from the Census Bureau. You may direct additional questions to Terri Ann Lowenthal, with the Funders Census Initiative, at TerriAnn2K@aol.com or 203-353-4364.

For anyone who needs assistance completing the 2010 Census form, there are several options such as the 2010census.gov website, Questionnaire Assistance Centers, and even local 2010 Census partners. The 2010census.gov website has a range of information including Language Assistance Guides in 59 languages—and coming soon, online videos in each of these languages to guide an individual or household through the questions step by step. Our partners and community organizations are encouraged to make use of these resources and share them with their members and constituents. For example:

- Organizations can send emails to their members with links to specific Language Assistance Guides or videos, or they could also play the video tutorial in a waiting area or lobby of their organization if they have walk-in traffic of those they serve.
- Churches can print out Language Assistance Guides and insert these guides in weekly bulletins.
- Schools can distribute Language Assistance Guides in their weekly "Take Home" packets from students to parents or guardians.

The Census Bureau will also provide direct assistance to respondents at the 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers that will be open from March 19th through April 19th. The Census Bureau will post the locations of the official Questionnaire Assistance Center locations on the official 2010census.gov website and users will be able to search for the nearest center using a Google map search. Each site will have specific hours and days of the week when sworn Census Bureau employees are available to assist individuals with their census forms. All Census Bureau employees are sworn for life to protect confidentiality and receive training on how to protect respondents' information.

Finally, in addition to the 30,000 official Questionnaire Assistance Centers, *other groups and individuals are allowed to provide similar assistance or share links.* For example, a neighbor may wish to assist another neighbor or an organization can also assist their members in completing the census form. ***However, it is important not to confuse such assistance efforts with the official Questionnaire Assistance Centers that are staffed by sworn Census Bureau employees.***

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We ask that community organizations or other 2010 Census partners that want to assist individuals with completing their form use the following guidance when providing such assistance.

DO ...

- **Do** refer people to official Questionnaire Assistance Centers whenever possible.
- **Do** make sure you are familiar with the 2010 Census materials and concepts. For more information and helpful documents, consult the official 2010census.gov website.
- **Do** use official Language Assistance Guides available at 2010census.gov for people with limited English proficiency.
- **Do** answer questions about the census in a private area.
- **Do** ask the respondent to seal the envelope and mail the form right away via the U.S. Postal Service.

DO NOT ...

- **Do not** pretend to be an official Questionnaire Assistance Center or use the official census logo if you are offering assistance.
- **Do not** help people complete forms or volunteer to staff the Questionnaire Assistance Center if your organization is hosting an official center that is staffed by a sworn census employee.
- **Do not** gather completed forms for mailing at a later time. Ask respondents to place their completed forms in mail receptacles that are emptied daily by the U.S. Postal Service.
- **Do not** offer to collect or "bundle" the 2010 Census Forms. It is important to avoid any suggestion of impropriety. Respondents should return their own census form by mail through the U.S. Postal Service.

This fact sheet was prepared by the Funders Census Initiative, March 2010. The guidelines were issued by the U.S. Census Bureau and have not been changed in any way.